

Jordan Sprague

From: Kathy Kleczek <kathy4seaside@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 25, 2021 8:00 PM
To: cdadmin@cityofseaside.us
Subject: Public Comment for proposed subdivision vista Ridge II
Attachments: Kathy and Nash.pdf

Dear planning department please include the attached story as part of the record on the proposed subdivision Vista Ridge II. I consider it a great illustration of why I am opposed to the proposal. The story also illustrates why the proposal is a bad idea for visitors to the area, and all the creatures that live in the area that would be changed forever.

Thank you,

Kathy Kleczek
Citizen and abutting property owner (not speaking as Planning Commissioner)

The Human Impact – Part 3

by DCSAdmin | Oct 9, 2021 | Human Impact

Kathy (and Nash)

Kathy moved into the house across the land from Solfrid & Ray 10 years ago. It is a quiet place to call home with friendly neighbors and a natural setting. Kathy is dynamic and thoughtful – qualities that aren’t often found together. She loves it here and can’t think of anywhere she’d rather be. Nash is her friendly and mischievous, 10-year-old otter-hound terrier mix. He has stunning brown eyes and a soft coat; he loves it here too.



Nash

Kathy has lived in the Seaside area for over 20 years and has watched it grow. She is a vital part of the community and now sits on the Planning Commission to ensure the community grows in a healthy and vibrant way. When this project is voted upon by the Planning Commission she can't participate. Her house is directly adjacent to the entrance of the development. She cannot – and does not – cross the boundary between her ethical responsibilities and this potential project. She can, however, comment as a private citizen whose life might be impacted by this project. And she does.

Water is her biggest concern. Kathy says that "the runoff from Aldercrest flows, literally, into my backyard." That runoff is the collection of waters that flow from the houses, streets, and now deforested area to the East and uphill from her home. Some is diverted into storm water pipes. The rest of the flow ends up in the creek running through her backyard ... ten feet from her house.

The walking bridge across the creek is close to failing from erosion. The water flows have increased as a result of the mostly bare, and poorly absorbing, soils that remain after the clearcutting on the hills. She continues "Even now, the water table is above the foundations of my house. The drawings are terrible and there are no drainage details in the plans." And there should be. It is required by code.



Stream bed proximity to Kathy's house

"My basement used to flood many times a year. I installed foundation drains to keep it dry. Like my neighbors, I've lost several feet of land to the creek in just 10 years." If this project were to move forward, even more water will flow into the canyon below. Installing a foundation drain should be just one of many mandatory requirements of a development on the difficult terrain. The experience of the existing uphill homeowners provides an important lesson in under-engineering. "They are passing the buck to the future residents."

There are two streams that divide the property along into three long East/West segments. Both of those streams run year-round and after the first significant rainfall since summer started, they are both healthy.

One of the streams is noted on a hand-drafted map from 1980. The other stream was created when waters were diverted from the creation of the Sunset Hills neighborhood. They were, and should remain in the future, two streams.

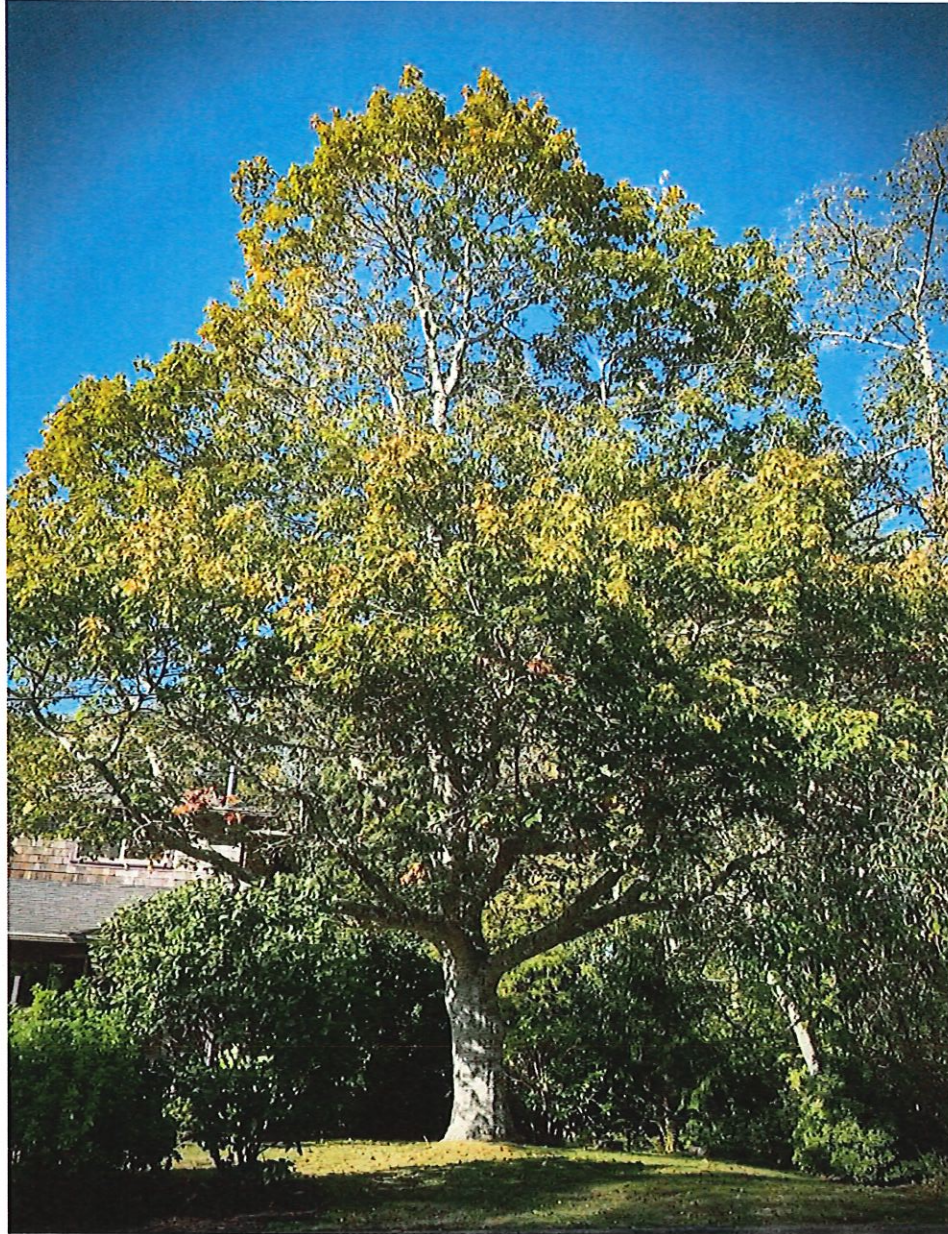
The map referenced is the "official" map that Seaside still uses to identify streams and wetlands, which are used to determine setbacks. The most current online maps show wetland areas on the property. None are shown on the map. Similar to other ordinance mismatches, the setback requirements for streams in the Seaside ordinances are less restrictive than the State of Oregon

seaside-major-freshwater-wetlands-map [Download](#)

Kathy has many questions. "Exactly where will the setbacks be? Exactly where is the top of bank. What are "nominal winter flows"? Where will the timber harvest take place? I have a huge Spruce that is over a hundred years old that is bent over the property line. Will it be cut?" That tree is ancient and beautiful.

And there's another beautiful tree on her property. An oak tree and those are rare. There are, likely, less than 10% of all original oak trees left standing in Oregon. Seaside has a tree committee,

and one might think that perhaps the old statesman should be designated as a heritage tree. It can't be cut down, but construction accidents happen. Additional water flows onto her property might saturate the soil causing rot or cause the tree to topple entirely in a windstorm.



The Elder Statesman Oak

There is still yet another concern. One that is shared by the entire community, and all of Oregon. How might this potential development impact the salmon that spawn in the estuary waters below? Kathy stops for a moment and then says "this is one of the last feeder streams here on the coast. Every creek and stream lost to development is another blow to the spawning grounds." And

both of these streams will be irreparably damaged. No conservation review is proposed or has been performed on the property. Given the potential impact of the project, this should be a requirement. There are no such ordinances in Seaside.

The timber harvest is understatedly described in the proposal as "The [removal of] major trees from the lot areas." But setbacks from the stream and creek may drive deep into the proposed lots. Kathy has more questions "Are there places where trees cannot be removed. Where can I see those details? Some of them are impossible to determine on the maps or in the report." All of the questions are justified.

The vague descriptions on poorly scanned maps leave much to the imagination, and out of the hands of those who provide governance and the public. There was no boundary or topographic survey performed for this parcel or development. The application is relying upon works performed for a previous project adjacent to this one. The Seaside ordinances require updated information that is specific to this site, and the public should have an opportunity to review.

There are state regulations that control where and how timber harvests may occur. They are restrictive when there are salmon in the waters. Seaside hasn't adopted the safe-harbor provisions as offered by the State of Oregon to include those regulations in their ordinances, so they don't apply within the city limits.

The timber is valuable; well into six figures. In the context of that estimate, it is noteworthy that the developers don't plan to build any houses in this residential neighborhood. Although briefly mentioned in verbal testimony, and at a point when the public had no ability to adequately respond, there is no mention of securing a permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands, Fish and Wildlife, or the Army Corps of Engineers - Wetlands in the report. Will this happen?



Stream water flow

Kathy owned a local clothing boutique for 20 years but now, works remotely for the State of Oregon through Sunset Empire Transportation District. She, like many others who now work at home and contribute less to climate change, is concerned about the potential for significant traffic and construction noise right outside her kitchen window.

She stays focused on the topic at hand. "This project, as it stands, must not be allowed to proceed. The impacts to the community and the natural environment do not outweigh the benefit of an additional small number of vacant lots. It's the wrong project for Seaside."

Nash, for his part, is getting antsy to go sniff out the local wildlife on his regular early-evening walk. But winter is just around the corner and his walks will be a little shorter and a lot less interesting if the trees are logged. The storm clouds are coming, and they will bring streams of tears if the road goes in, and the water rises.

Next – Part 4 – Rebecca and Brian (and Sky)